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THE ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING IN DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 8 July 1999, the Security Council considered the matter of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment as part of its continuing effort to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building activities. In a presidential statement (S/PRST/1999/21) issued after the meeting, the Security Council requested that I submit to it a report containing my analysis, observations and recommendations, to facilitate its further consideration of the matter. It also urged that the report pay special attention to the problems of disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers and their reintegration into society.

2. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

II. EVOLUTION OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING IN DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

3. In the civil conflicts of the post-cold-war era, a process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has repeatedly proved to be vital to stabilizing a post-conflict situation; to reducing the likelihood of renewed violence, either because of relapse into war or outbreaks of banditry; and to facilitating a society's transition from conflict to normalcy and development. Furthermore, the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration may have a symbolic and political importance beyond the sum of its parts. Even if full disarmament and demilitarization prove unachievable, a credible programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration may nonetheless make a key contribution to strengthening confidence between former factions and enhancing the momentum toward stability.

4. The foundation of a successful process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is the political will of the parties to commit themselves to peace. Political leaders must build working relationships through commitment to reconciliation and to undertaking necessary institutional reforms. The

widespread engagement and support of civil society in general is essential for the long-term impact of the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

5. At the same time, the complexity and fragility of this process often require the assistance of the international community. As recognized by the Security Council in its statements on this subject (S/PRST/1999/21 and S/PRST/1999/28), an impartial United Nations peacekeeping operation can play an essential role, by discharging a number of key tasks, and by helping to create an environment where the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process can ultimately be successful.

6. Within a peacekeeping environment, the activities of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration can be defined as follows:

(a) Disarmament is the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. It frequently entails the assembly and cantonment of combatants; it should also comprise the development of arms management programmes, including their safe storage and their final disposition, which may entail their destruction. Demining may also be part of this process.

(b) Demobilization refers to the process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation into civilian life. It generally entails registration of former combatants; some kind of assistance to enable them to meet their immediate basic needs; discharge, and transportation to their home communities. It may be followed by recruitment into a new, unified military force.

(c) Reintegration refers to the process which allows ex-combatants and their families to adapt, economically and socially, to productive civilian life. It generally entails the provision of a package of cash or in-kind compensation, training, and job- and income-generating projects. These measures frequently depend for their effectiveness upon other, broader undertakings, such as assistance to returning refugees and internally displaced persons; economic development at the community and national level; infrastructure rehabilitation; truth and reconciliation efforts; and institutional reform. Enhancement of local capacity is often crucial for the long-term success of reintegration.

7. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process may need to include special attention to the needs of child soldiers. A child soldier has been defined as any person under 18 years of age who forms part of an armed force in any capacity, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members, as well as girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage.

8. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process cannot be viewed as a simple sequence of events. Rather, these activities form a continuum whose elements overlap with one another, and are related and mutually reinforcing. The success of the process is dependent on the success of each of its steps.

9. Although the engagement of United Nations operations in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is relatively recent, it has rapidly become a

well-established feature of post-cold-war peacekeeping. The first United Nations peacekeeping operation to undertake disarmament and demobilization was the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), which was deployed in 1989. Since then, other operations which have had key responsibilities for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration have included the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL); the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC); the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ); the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL); the United Nations Angola Verification Mission II and III (UNAVEM) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA); the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES); the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA); the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT); and the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

10. In other cases, United Nations operations have assumed responsibility for only some elements. For example, disarmament, by force if necessary, formed part of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) II. Disarmament and destruction of weapons is part of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). The United Nations operation in East Timor is also engaged in related activities, as it seeks to create a working physical and social infrastructure within a post-conflict society.

11. While each peace process is unique, a review of these experiences reveals certain recurrent patterns that hold lessons for the future. The present report seeks to identify some key elements that favour the success of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, to highlight ways in which peacekeeping has assisted in the past, and to suggest ways in which the United Nations can better support future efforts.

III. SUPPORTING DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION IN A PEACEKEEPING ENVIRONMENT

A. Planning phase

12. Timely implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes depends upon accurate information from the parties on the size and location of their armed forces; number, type and location of weapons; and agreement on the location of sites for disarmament and demobilization, as well as on the timing of these processes.

13. Past experience suggests that, ideally, the basis for a successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should be laid within the peace agreement which provides for the end of a conflict. The parties should provide the information indicated in paragraph 12 above during the negotiation phase of the process. The agreement should stipulate responsibilities of leading national institutions and other actors essential to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and should outline their basic approach to the problem, including strategies and time-frames. Such clarity may

assist all parties to understand and prepare for their commitments, and can prevent delays that could otherwise be destabilizing. The inclusion of these elements can also send a political message, underlining the importance of completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

14. At times, when former combatants have not been ready to agree on a precise outline of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, peace agreements have simply included a general commitment to demilitarize, with the understanding that details may be worked out once the peace process acquires its own momentum. While there is sometimes no responsible alternative to this course of action, such a lack of clarity carries inherent risks.

15. Therefore, it is important that the international community promote the inclusion of these specific elements within a peace agreement. Towards this end, a useful source of institutional knowledge is found in the lessons-learned review of experiences within disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in peacekeeping operations which was recently prepared by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat. It is a compilation of best practices, as was called for by the Security Council (S/PRST/1999/28), and may assist Member States and others in their training efforts.

16. The States Members of the United Nations can help provide political momentum that can encourage negotiators to make hard decisions on this issue. A clear indication that the Security Council is prepared to deploy a peacekeeping operation with the necessary expertise and resources to support these undertakings may be a key inducement for parties to accept a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Where a United Nations peacekeeping role is envisioned, the Secretariat should be represented in peace negotiations, to promote a realistic framework for subsequent efforts.

17. The success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes requires the full cooperation of the entire affected population, combatants and non-combatants, throughout the process. In view of the role that effective communication may play in promoting understanding and a sense of ownership within the local population, an appropriate public information strategy, supported by the necessary means and resources, should form an integral part of peacekeeping operations with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration responsibilities.

18. Where relevant, the role of children in armed conflict should be acknowledged from the onset of peace negotiations and children's rights should be identified as an explicit priority in peacemaking, peace-building and conflict resolution processes, both in the peace agreement and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plans.

19. Today, it is estimated that as many as 300,000 children under the age of 18 serve in armed conflicts around the world, and recent studies show that the magnitude and geographic scope of child participation in such activities is large and growing. The experience of children in armed conflict is generally characterized by enormous risk to their physical, emotional and social well-being; even if they survive the rigours and risks of combat, they may

suffer severe long-term psychological consequences. It is urgent that they be fully included in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

20. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Protocols thereto of 1977, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) provide the fundamental law and guiding principles that should underpin initiatives on behalf of children, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

21. Relevant international humanitarian and human rights law require that at a minimum:

(a) Parties to the conflict must neither recruit persons who have not attained the age of 15 years nor allow them to take a direct part in hostilities. In January 2000, the Working Group on a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflict reached a consensus agreement on raising the minimum age for participation in conflict from 15 to 18, and setting the age limit for compulsory recruitment to 18 and the minimum age for voluntary enlistment to at least 16. The Optional Protocol would significantly strengthen the legal basis for action on behalf of children who are being used as soldiers.

(b) States must support measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of armed conflict. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment that fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

(c) Children who take part in hostilities and are captured retain their right to special protection.

22. Other principles of particular importance in the preparation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme are non-discrimination, gender equity, non-institutionalization and non-stigmatization of the children, and early family reunification. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process should respect the human dignity of the child and the need for confidentiality. Adequate time and appropriately trained personnel, nationals when feasible, should be provided to impart a sense of security to the children and facilitate the sharing of information and concerns. Children should be consulted at various stages of the demobilization and reintegration process, and should participate in determining their fates with regard to issues of family reunification, vocational or educational opportunities.

23. The child-conscious components of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, which may be designed in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), other relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations with expertise in the field, should be planned, executed, and evaluated within the framework of the central disarmament, demobilization and reintegration committees and monitoring bodies. This is particularly necessary because parties to a conflict often fail to acknowledge that children are among their ranks, resulting in their exclusion from the benefits attached to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration exercise. In addition, since past experience has shown that only a limited proportion of child soldiers have participated in formal disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration programmes, it may be necessary to develop parallel plans to document, track and provide support for those child combatants who do not enter the formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

24. While the long-term nature of the tasks associated with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers requires the involvement of development actors, a peacekeeping operation can be of vital assistance in launching this process. As a matter of policy, the Secretariat seeks to include within all operations, where relevant, personnel with appropriate training in international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, including child- and gender-related provisions. A new initiative in this regard is the inclusion of the position of a child protection adviser in two United Nations operations, in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who will provide their missions with an overall vision of the needs of children and for child protection, and will promote a comprehensive approach to these issues. This initiative offers a model for the future.

25. This first step should be seen as the beginning of a process of strengthening the performance of United Nations peacekeeping in addressing the special needs of children in each aspect of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process - a process whose success will demand the sustained political, moral and financial support of both the Secretariat and the Member States.

B. Disarmament

26. In many conflict areas, particularly those where a civil war has gone on for a protracted period, possession of a weapon may come to represent not only a means of self-defence, but also an integral part of an individual's identity and an important status symbol. In addition, in many cases, political leaders who fear the loss of their power may seek to undermine the beginning of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, through subversion and through threats.

27. At the same time, since disarmament generally comes early in a peace process, combatants have to make a leap of faith in giving up their weapons. This concrete and irreversible step may have to be taken in the absence of compelling evidence that a peace process will bring long-term benefits.

28. Former combatants may therefore need considerable reassurance in advance of, and during, the disarmament phase. This includes reassurance that their security will be safeguarded; that their political concerns will not be ignored; that they will not lack basic necessities; and that they will not find themselves at the margins of society.

29. One problem in this regard has been the dilemma of swiftly providing adequate support, including food, to former combatants during the period between the implementation of a ceasefire and their arrival at a cantonment site. Prohibitions against provision of food by bilateral donors and United Nations agencies to armed combatants may mean that, where the needs of former combatants are acute, tensions can rise, and may lead indirectly to banditry.

Role of United Nations peacekeeping in disarmament

30. United Nations peacekeeping operations may assist in addressing these needs in a number of ways.

31. Confidence building. Based on the universality and impartiality of the United Nations, its peacekeepers enjoy a legitimacy that enables them to undertake sensitive tasks that build confidence between parties so that disarmament can proceed. These include the monitoring of ceasefires and separation of forces; supervision of disarmament in assembly areas and public collection sites; taking custody of weapons turned in; monitoring of local law enforcement; and assistance in addressing the problem of arms flows into a conflict area.

32. Sense of security. Second, a United Nations peacekeeping operation can introduce a sense of security by promoting the safety of former combatants. Relevant tasks include those listed above, as well as the securing of assembly areas and mine clearance. Regional peacekeeping forces may be able to assist in some of these areas, in which case United Nations peacekeepers may support their efforts through impartial observation and advice. Such partnerships are discussed further in the context of demobilization.

33. Sustaining momentum. Third, a peacekeeping operation can help sustain the political momentum necessary for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to advance. The focus of the international community may deter backsliding from commitments to disarm by combatants, while the participation of the United Nations in joint planning bodies can facilitate parties' engagement with one another in an atmosphere of trust. The ability of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in this regard is directly related to the prominence given to its role within a peace process, and to the ongoing political support provided by the Security Council. This issue is also treated at greater length below.

34. Channelling expertise. Fourth, a peacekeeping operation may provide a mechanism to channel expertise and resources demanded by an effective disarmament exercise, including provision of incentives for disarmament and the means to destroy arms. In addition, while in most cases the responsibility for the assembly of combatants lies with the factions, peacekeeping operations may assist with the transportation of combatants to the sites.

35. Certain areas where the United Nations capacity to act should be strengthened are outlined below.

Availability of appropriate expertise and resources

36. Successful disarmament may require access to considerable technical skills and institutional knowledge. Communication in the Secretariat on issues related to disarmament has been enhanced with the mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms. However, in the past, the United Nations has at times experienced difficulty in locating experienced disarmament experts and trainers for service within peacekeeping operations in the field. I welcome the Security Council's encouragement, in its presidential statement, to Governments to establish

databases of expertise on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and its recognition of the usefulness of the inclusion of such issues within national training programmes. Furthermore, a number of non-governmental organizations have considerable expertise in this area. The International Action Network on Small Arms, a network of over 200 non-governmental organizations established in October 1998, may provide an additional pool of expertise which could be drawn upon in specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

37. In addition, it may be necessary to make provisions that enable peacekeeping operations to offer incentives to encourage disarmament, either directly or through cooperation with humanitarian and development actors and non-governmental organizations. A cautious approach in such situations is necessary, and the final decision to support these programmes should consider the potential effects at the local, national and regional levels.

38. At various times, "buy-back" programmes have been considered as a means to accelerate disarmament and advance a peace process. While weapons exchanges that offer direct financial payments to individuals have been used in the past, and may again be necessary in the future, such programmes may be destabilizing in post-conflict countries and regions marred by insecurity. The establishment of a high price for weapons so as to promote disarmament may paradoxically create an artificial market for weapons and spark an overwhelming movement of weapons into the country and surrounding region. Buy-back programmes directed toward civilians may have a further, negative impact upon disarmament, since military combatants, who are instructed by their leaders to hand over weapons and are not paid to do so, may perceive this as unfair.

39. Other forms of reimbursement based upon non-monetary rewards may be less problematic. Weapons collection programmes can be linked with humanitarian and development initiatives, such as food, housing support or job training.

40. In the context of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Mozambique, under a programme run by a non-governmental organization, weapons were exchanged for such tools as sewing machines, bicycles, hoes and construction materials. Such incentives may be geared to benefit entire communities, as a means of increasing local pressure for disarmament. Where groups of combatants have not responded to orders to disarm, it may be useful to consider incentives for group returns of weapons. One interesting United Nations initiative in this regard, although not taken in a peacekeeping context, is the community-based pilot programme in Gramsh, Albania, where services such as new schools, health care, and road repairs are provided to communities in exchange for arms and munitions.

41. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) manages a trust fund for support of prevention and reduction in the proliferation of small arms which operates on the basis of a "weapons for development" approach, and which has been used to fund the Gramsh project. Depending upon the provision of sufficient financial support by the international community, this fund could also be used to support similar efforts in conjunction with peacekeeping operations.

The disposal of arms and ammunition

42. It is desirable that the arrangements for the disposal of arms and ammunition be decided as part of peace negotiations, so that the question of what to do with the collected arms and ammunition does not become a stumbling block in the implementation of the peace process. Without such a determination, the question of the destruction of arms may remain a concern for the international community long after a peacekeeping operation is withdrawn, as was seen recently in Liberia.

43. In some situations, the United Nations has kept custody of weapons which have ultimately been provided to restructured armed forces. However, the best scenario for disposal of weapons is frequently their destruction. Such a measure can serve not only as a means of creating security, but also as a strong symbol that the country is embarking on an era of peace. It may therefore be useful to have a public, large-scale destruction ceremony at key points within a disarmament exercise and/or at its conclusion.

44. Apart from provisions for the disposition of arms in a particular situation, it may be desirable to establish criteria or categories for weapons, such as landmines or unmarked weapons, whose destruction by a peacekeeping operation would be particularly desirable.

45. A number of different types of destructive techniques exist. In deciding the most appropriate, factors to be taken into account include the numbers and types of weapons involved; the urgency of the disarmament process; environmental impact; reliability of the technique; cost; and availability of means and expertise. A detailed discussion of these options may be found within the lessons-learned review of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration practices cited above.

46. The destruction of weapons has certain resource implications. Where destruction of weapons is an integral element within a peacekeeping operation, it may be appropriate to ensure that the necessary funding is available through its inclusion within the assessed budget of that operation.

47. Furthermore, to better ensure United Nations preparedness for these tasks, it may be useful for Member States to indicate within the standby arrangements system or national databases the availability of equipment for destruction of small arms and light weapons.

Illicit arms flows

48. Often today's conflicts bring about a flow of weapons across borders. If disarmament is to be undertaken effectively, it may be necessary to impose a local arms embargo. The deployment of United Nations forces along a national border may help deter smuggling efforts. Bilateral decisions to share intelligence and information; regional cooperation; and continued support from the Security Council, are all prerequisites for success in this area.

49. In view of the regional dimensions that often characterize such arms flows, it may also at times be considered useful to position United Nations personnel

in surrounding countries, to maintain liaison with national counterparts and monitor arms flows from a regional perspective. However, this is a particularly difficult task, and to be effective would require unwavering political engagement from the international community.

50. A response to arms trafficking may also require a focus on financial flows, including information on where faction leaders are obtaining funds, where they are holding them, and how they are spending them. A clear example of the interplay between commerce and disarmament is offered by the United Nations efforts in Angola, where the continuing capacity of the combatants to purchase armaments meant that pursuit of political goals through violence remained a viable option.

51. While the Secretariat possesses institutional knowledge on these questions, effective action depends upon full involvement of Member States, including members of the Security Council and ad hoc groupings with a particular interest in a peace process. Through targeted sanctions, by sharing and publicizing information on financial transactions, by engaging businesses and financial institutions to help prevent illicit arms flows, and by taking action against those that facilitate them, Member States may be able to make an impact on the ability of local factions to obtain the means of violence. The international community may also find it helpful to engage other actors in these efforts, including non-governmental organizations. One recent example of such engagement is the announcement by the International Diamond Manufacturers Association, in response to concerns expressed by the Security Council, that it is working within the diamond community to ensure that there is zero tolerance in respect of any violation of the Angola sanctions. The question of closer cooperation with business is discussed in more detail below.

52. This and other innovative responses developed to address the extremely difficult situation in Angola may offer useful models for the future. This includes the creation pursuant to Security Council resolution 1237 (1999) of panels of experts, under the sanctions committee established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993), that could identify measures to support sanctions by preventing financial resources from being used by targeted groups for purchasing weapons. The Secretariat looks forward to the issuance of the final report of the expert panels, which could offer further valuable insights.

Disarmament of child soldiers

53. Where disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes required weapons to be surrendered as a criterion for eligibility, they have often inadvertently excluded children, and especially girls, as was the case in Angola and Liberia. In this context, child soldiers should be considered eligible to enter the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process irrespective of whether they can present themselves at the assembly points with weapons.

Longer-term measures

54. The ability of peacekeeping operations to support a particular disarmament process should be considered in the context of long-term, preventive measures that can be taken by the international community. Several such measures were

highlighted in my report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318). Many could be applied to other regions.

55. Successful disarmament can draw upon actions at the bilateral, regional and global levels. Member States can inhibit the flow of arms through laws to prevent sales of weapons to regions of conflict, and committing themselves to prosecution of those who infringe these prohibitions. Regional initiatives on arms flows such as the moratorium declared by the Economic Community of West African States (which is being supported by UNDP) can help to lay the foundation for more effective action. Where the task of formulating or acting upon a regional approach requires external support, the Secretariat stands ready to assist. In this regard, it should be noted that the Department for Disarmament Affairs has established a trust fund for the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures, which can be used to advance such discussions, as well as supporting specific initiatives in the context of a peacekeeping operation.

56. At the global level, it could also be helpful to pursue international support for the marking of small arms and light weapons, allowing for tracing of the origin of weapons, pursuant to a recommendation contained in the August 1999 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (A/54/258). In that report, the Group also recommended that States should adopt and enforce necessary measures to prevent the manufacture or trafficking of unmarked small arms.

57. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be convened in June/July 2001, offers a historic opportunity for further progress.

C. Demobilization

58. Demobilization advances the process, launched with disarmament, of converting combatants who pursue their objectives through force to civilians who pursue their objectives through other means. Like disarmament, it may prove a critical test of a peace process.

59. As with disarmament, this process may be hampered by fear on the part of combatants that they will lose prestige, and on the part of their leaders that they will lose power. In many of today's conflict-riven areas, military life is the only trade known by the soldiers being asked to demobilize; demobilization may require them to abandon their only marketable skill, their social network, and their political clout.

60. Furthermore, these problems are frequently exacerbated by physical deprivation. As former combatants spend time in camps prior to discharge, they may lack essentials; and while they are without means to independently support themselves, they may also be under pressure to provide for family and other dependents.

61. On the side of progress, there may be disillusionment with military service, war weariness, and the hope that a new life may be possible. The chances of success for a demobilization process can be promoted by efforts to make the advantages of demobilization as evident as possible, while alleviating the hardships associated with it.

Role of United Nations peacekeeping in demobilization

62. As with disarmament, local leaders have primary responsibility for the success of this process. Nothing can compensate for lack of commitment by the warring parties to a peace process. However, through deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, the international community can assist with this difficult period. Peacekeepers can foster trust between warring sides by impartially undertaking such sensitive tasks as monitoring and verification of demobilizing troops; keeping records; and ensuring the security of quartered personnel. At the same time, beyond these practical contributions, a peacekeeping presence can maintain the profile of the international community, and manifest its interest in advancing a peace process.

Importance of adequate means

63. Past experience has shown the close connection that may exist between a peacekeeping operation's ability to advance demobilization and the swift provision of ample resources and strong political support.

64. The experience of UNAVEM II in Angola is instructive in this regard. While responsibility for the failure of demobilization must above all be attributed to lack of political will on the part of the parties, it has often been suggested that the limited role of the United Nations hamstrung its efforts to help address this situation. Problems included the operation's very limited staffing; its marginal role in "verifying" progress and its exclusion from the key commission established to oversee the process; and the non-existence of mandates for human rights activities or institution-building. The much larger operation that was deployed subsequently, UNAVEM III, was also unable to ensure disarmament and demobilization because of non-compliance by UNITA, despite its much more extensive resources and staffing.

65. A counterpoint to this failed process can be identified in the United Nations experience in Mozambique. There, in part as a reaction to the setbacks in Angola, the Security Council strongly supported the efforts of ONUMOZ, which played a key role in bringing the demobilization process to a successful conclusion. This was possible not only because of the resources at its disposal but because of the constant high-level political attention given to this process through the operation.

66. A lesson that can be extracted from these experiences is that short-term savings with regard to economic or political capital may come at a very high long-term price. There are instances in which a prominent role and ample resources for the United Nations are essential. These experiences also suggest that the international community must swiftly and vigorously seize the window of opportunity to advance a peace process through disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration if it exists; if neglected, it may vanish, and it may be long before a second such chance presents itself.

Deterrent capacity

67. The ability of an operation to reassure demobilizing combatants of their security may require considerable deterrent capacity; this should be available as swiftly as possible with deployment of an operation. If an operation arrives in the field without the necessary capacity, this not only hobbles its practical effectiveness, but undermines its political viability. Credibility becomes a wasting asset unless support is forthcoming to sustain it, and where an operation is called upon to discharge a robust role in ensuring security, it is particularly important that well-equipped elements be deployed quickly. A mission that has been perceived as strong from the beginning of its deployment is far less likely to be tested than one which is perceived as initially vulnerable or ineffective.

68. The experience of the United Nations in UNTAES shows the degree to which a well-equipped operation with strong deterrent capacity can achieve its goals even in the most difficult environments, as long as these fall within the parameters of peacekeeping. Local recognition of the capabilities of the operation, and of the strong political support of the international community, facilitated its successful demilitarization of the area, including the removal of light and heavy weapons.

Regional forces

69. In situations where regional forces are involved in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, a relevant framework for cooperation between regional or multinational forces and United Nations operations was sketched by the Security Council during its consideration of follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

70. Such cooperation presents certain problems that must be taken into account. Certain tensions may also be generated by having two forces, with differing mandates, lines of command and conditions of service working in a single mission area. There may also be an urgent need for resources to support a regional operation, which may be difficult to obtain. Where no sure source of funds exists, it may be desirable to provide necessary funding through the assessed budget of a co-deployed United Nations observer mission.

71. In view of the sensitivities that are often involved during the early phases in a peace process, political or historical associations may make it undesirable to give primary responsibilities for demobilization to regional forces even where they possess the necessary expertise and capacity. Experience suggests that, in general, while regional organizations may make an essential contribution in ensuring security, it may be preferable for the international observers directly supervising demobilization to come from outside the region.

Resources

72. In view of the privations that are often experienced during encampment, it is desirable to keep this phase as short as possible. However, for its duration, the international community may play a key role in ensuring the availability of provisions both for demobilizing ex-combatants, and for their dependents. War disabled and war widows may also need special care. While basic needs such as shelter and infrastructure in camps are customarily provided by military components, other key elements remain the responsibility of humanitarian or development actors, including the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF and the World Health Organization, sometimes working with non-governmental organizations; such elements include in particular the provision of demobilization packages, training and counselling, which are essential for successful completion of the process.

73. The need for close coordination in the provision of funds and resources between voluntary and assessed funding is particularly acute during the period of cantonment. While the resources for disarmament are generally provided through the assessed budget of a peacekeeping operation, the international community ordinarily relies on voluntary funding to carry out demobilization and reintegration. Often, such funding may be slow or not forthcoming. This could result in a potentially explosive situation where combatants are ready to disarm, or have done so, but are left with no support to reintegrate into civilian life. This situation may not only generate banditry, but can pave the way for a reversal of political progress, even to the extent of jeopardizing the peace process.

74. In future, the Security Council may wish to consider demobilization exercises, or at least their initial stages, as an integral part of the mandate for the peacekeeping operations, when such elements would play a crucial part in ensuring peace, so that they could be supported by assessed contributions for the operation. In considering this question, the Council may wish to review the particular need for funding for special measures for child soldiers, including girl soldiers, such as provisions for longer-term needs for education, vocational training and psychological/social support.

75. Bearing in mind the key importance of advancing the process of demobilization and reintegration of combatants, and the difficulty in obtaining sufficient voluntary funding, I have also in some cases requested the provision of seed money for "quick impact projects" within the assessed budget of peacekeeping missions. These funds have allowed the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to proceed while voluntary funding is mobilized. Once voluntary funding is forthcoming, the assessed budget can be reimbursed accordingly.

Demobilization of child soldiers

76. Even when the principle of child demobilization has been recognized at the policy level and within the plans for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, several demobilization exercises, such as the ones in Mozambique and Angola, reveal that concrete implementation of child-conscious

demobilization plans has often lagged behind or has been entirely forgotten. Priority must be given in practice to child demobilization.

77. It is desirable that, after completing the necessary process of documentation at the encampment site, child soldiers should be transferred as soon as possible to an interim care site or centre under civilian control. Immediate separation from adult soldiers is the most efficient way to protect children from further abuse at the time of demobilization. Essential services such as health, counselling, and psychosocial support should be provided to the children at the civilian interim care site. Any assembly area must be sufficiently far from the conflict zones to ensure security for the children and prevent renewed recruitment. The presence and needs of girl soldiers should be systematically assessed in a way that takes into account their roles serving armies - as fighters, cooks, messengers, spies, to perform labour and as wives and sexual slaves.

Formation of a unified force

78. Demobilization may be followed by recruitment into a unified defence force. The role of the defence force, its composition, criteria for selection, rules for its operation and its budget, a timetable for its formation, and mechanisms for oversight of this process, should be considered at an early stage in planning, at the same time as disarmament. Once a unified force has been formed, further efforts may be required to ensure that it operates firmly under civilian control, is professional and has the necessary equipment. This may require the readiness of the international community to make available appropriate military and other expertise in the field, as was done, for example, during the peace process in Tajikistan.

79. Demobilized children should not be integrated into unified armed forces, nor should demobilization exercises be used as a means to support the establishment of cadet military academies.

D. Reintegration

80. The reintegration process represents a particularly complex part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration continuum. The goal of ensuring that warring factions can once more join civil society may require not only direct assistance to demobilized combatants, but also broader support to the country's efforts to adapt the social and economic environment so that it can reabsorb them.

81. As is true of the other elements within a process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the success of reintegration depends above all on the commitment of the local population, who must persuade those who are rejoining civil society that they can achieve a safe and prosperous life without relying upon violence, and that they will not be supported if they try to persist as combatants. If a reintegration process is to succeed, it is essential that it draw upon local input, and that it support a broader national strategic plan for reconciliation, reconstruction and development.

82. As described above, both the political and economic aspects of reintegration can derive crucial initial impetus from the presence of an international peacekeeping operation. This foundation must be built upon by further long-term efforts, within which other parts of the United Nations system, particularly humanitarian and development actors, can continue to assist.

Role of United Nations peacekeeping in reintegration

83. The contribution of a peacekeeping operation to the reintegration process may begin with transportation of former combatants to their homes. Peacekeeping operations may also offer a distribution mechanism for a "reinsertion" package to allow them to begin civil life, and for monthly assistance packages, where these have been provided. As with demobilization packages, it may be useful for the Security Council to provide some assistance in this area through the assessed budget.

Creating a favourable environment: physical infrastructure

84. These measures exist within the context of other, more sweeping efforts. Successful reintegration frequently demands comprehensive efforts that are directed not only toward the former combatants, but also to the physical, social and political framework within which they hope to embark upon their new lives.

85. Before full-scale development efforts get under way, it may be helpful for the military component of a peacekeeping operation to support reintegration by strengthening physical infrastructure. Peacekeepers frequently undertake the task of mine clearance, for example. In addition, it could be helpful for an operation to employ the local population, including ex-combatants, to undertake such relatively low-cost tasks as digging wells or helping to repair roads. As a short-term measure, it may at times be useful for peacekeepers to undertake such tasks themselves, pending the development of local capacity.

86. Such efforts can address urgent needs, pave the way for economic recovery, improve morale and strengthen support from the local population. The international community may wish more frequently to consider how the necessary capacity could be incorporated within future operations that will undertake disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities. This could include making allowances for further flexibility on the part of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the distribution of some percentage of a mission budget to support projects to be undertaken by the local population. This would be particularly important during the start-up phase, pending the mobilization of voluntary funding.

Creating a favourable environment: political and social infrastructure

87. If reintegration is to be successful, former combatants must have faith that mechanisms of governance are transparent, and accessible to their representatives. The civil service, for instance, must be viewed as the impartial servant of the State, rather than of its political leaders. All three pillars of the justice system - law enforcement, the judiciary and the penal system - must function in an impartial and professional manner, and be seen to

do so. Human rights institutions may need to be developed, and international norms may need to be codified into national law.

88. United Nations operations have become a key means through which the international community has sought to advance these objectives. Among the relevant activities that have been undertaken by United Nations peacekeeping operations are monitoring and, at times, organizing and conducting elections; strengthening the capacity of police and other elements of the justice system; enhancing human rights institutions and respect for them; and the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons.

89. It is crucial during the early, most vulnerable stages of a peace process that those with the greatest interest in derailing it, or inclination to do so, be swiftly made aware of the benefits of abandoning violence and be reassured that they will still be able to make their voices heard. It may therefore at times be necessary during reintegration to ensure particular provisions for reintegrating combatants.

90. The United Nations Operation in Mozambique merits particular study because of its efforts to ensure that all factions viewed the political process as one in which they could reasonably hope to compete; its successful efforts in this regard, including its provision of resources through donor conferences and trust funds, may offer a useful model for future operations.

91. Beyond efforts to level the political playing field, ensuring the long-term reintegration of former combatants often requires the parties to adjust basic political structures to avoid a winner-takes-all system; governments of national unity have often proved to be an important device in such situations. In general, it is crucial that the international community enhance its understanding of the systems through which majorities can express their will, while recognizing the rights of minorities and, in particular, of the ways in which multiple ethnicities can be accommodated within a single State. Such understanding is not only essential to dealing with the conflicts before the United Nations today but may contribute to averting further conflicts tomorrow.

Reintegration of child soldiers

92. International programmers should plan for long-term assistance to child soldiers, and community capacity to sustain the essential services should be developed. A minimum three-year commitment of resources and staff is generally necessary to ensure child soldier reintegration. Reintegration programmes should be developed with the communities of origin. They should build on existing resources, and take account of the context and the priorities, values and traditions of the community. Dialogue with communities can facilitate understanding of their main concerns for their children and their perception of their own roles and responsibilities with regard to those children. Family reunification is the principal factor in effective social reintegration and most often corresponds with the desire of children.

93. Provision should be made for education and, as appropriate, for relevant vocational training and opportunities for employment or self-employment, including for children with disabilities. Traditional apprenticeship models,

where the trainee is taken in as part of the master craftsman's family, may prove useful. Upon completion of vocational skills training, trainees should be provided with the relevant tools and, where possible, with start-up loans to promote self-reliance. Reintegration programmes must replace the economic incentives of war for child warriors; at the same time, training or educational programmes should be geared to the existing economy and avoid creating false expectations about the possibilities for economic reinsertion. To avoid stigmatization or the perception that former child soldiers receive "privileged" treatment, support should be provided to the extent possible within the framework of programme assistance to all war-affected children. A useful example in this regard may be seen in Liberia's programme to address the needs of all children affected by armed conflict, which includes some specific activities to foster community reintegration focusing on ex-child soldiers, both boys and girls.

94. Special protection measures should be implemented to respond to the needs of girl soldiers. Reintegration programmes must consider the provision of training or services to address the special vulnerabilities of female ex-combatants and their children, especially when the mother is a very young former combatant. Girls or women who have suffered sexual abuse, have been forced to participate in violence, or have had to bear children to their victimizers, may risk rejection by their communities, calling for special intervention and community sensitization. It may also be necessary to make particular efforts in training and employment to ensure the economic reintegration of female ex-combatants.

95. Specific responses are also needed for particularly vulnerable sub-categories, such as children with disabilities, child soldiers with children of their own, or child soldiers with drug addictions. This may require linkages between a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and existing programmes for addressing children's health needs.

96. To the extent that national or international efforts to seek truth or achieve justice in the aftermath of conflict involve children - whether as witnesses, victims or perpetrators - measures may be called for to ensure that they are not traumatized again in the process. It may be necessary to ensure that children who have participated in hostilities benefit from amnesty or special legal procedures that provide all the judicial guarantees owed to children.

Harmonization of efforts by a peacekeeping operation

97. Because of its far-reaching nature, reintegration may entail efforts by a wide range of actors within the international community. It is not practical to offer an exhaustive account of the actors that have been involved in reintegration where a peacekeeping operation was deployed; however, even a representative list shows clearly the diversity of those elements within and outside the United Nations system that can contribute.

98. Within the United Nations system, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has lead responsibility for multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Other departments within the Secretariat that assist with the disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration continuum and may be able to assist during the reintegration phase include the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of Legal Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs. Key funds and programmes within the United Nations include the United Nations Development Programme, which has implemented severance payment schemes, organized aid packages, promoted rehabilitation of community infrastructure, supported referral services and provided vocational training and employment opportunities. As an element in its reintegration programmes, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has contributed to education and vocation training for ex-child soldiers. UNICEF provides policy and operational support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of children, in cooperation with Governments, other United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations. In addition, UNICEF and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict together play a key role in global advocacy to promote awareness of these needs. The United Nations Development Fund for Women can contribute at the country level to promote women's participation in reconstruction efforts, through capacity-building and rights advocacy.

99. Specialized agencies within the United Nations system may also provide key assistance with these tasks. The World Bank has provided financial and technical assistance; with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, it is working to enhance still further its cooperation with peacekeeping operations. FAO works in tandem with WFP to promote longer-term progress following initial relief efforts. It may provide agricultural assets and technical assistance to help former combatants begin farming, as well as veterinary medicines and technical assistance in their use. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has given essential assistance, including through the provision of vocational training in post-conflict societies.

100. In addition to those within the United Nations system, peacekeeping operations have worked in close cooperation with a number of regional organizations; intergovernmental bodies, such as the International Organization for Migration; and bilateral programmes. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations are playing an increasingly important role, beyond their capacity for advocacy and raising awareness. Together with bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations can bring resources and expertise to the field, in key areas ranging from development to health to human rights.

101. By offering a channel to coordinate the wide-ranging activities that are crucial to success, the head of a peacekeeping operation can enable the donor community to speak with a unified and more influential voice. By focusing upon established structures for the distribution of resources, a peacekeeping operation can limit the risk of incoherent aid flows leading to further disintegration of a post-conflict society, which can at times be an inadvertent side-effect of efforts by multiple donors to strengthen a community.

102. Coordination within the United Nations system has been reinforced at Headquarters through the structures of the Senior Management Group, the executive committee system, and various ad hoc task forces; these include a task force within the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs that is considering the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in general, with a

special focus on demobilization. By maintaining clear institutional divisions of responsibility, and entrusting both lead authority and the responsibility for consultation to one department, this system has helped to ensure consolidated guidance. Coordination in the field has also been strengthened through the consolidation of the Special Representative's authority over all United Nations entities, and can be further strengthened through appointment of the Resident Coordinator as deputy to the Head of Mission. Experience has shown that these mechanisms provide ample capacity for coordinating the United Nations efforts in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration where peacekeeping operations are deployed. However, as with any structure, their effectiveness depends upon individual efforts to make them work; the Secretariat is now working to ensure that the organizational culture within the system supports such coordination. Furthermore, in view of the extensive engagement of peacekeeping operations in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the creation within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of dedicated capacity for these issues could favour greater effectiveness, enhanced communication, and the development of essential institutional knowledge.

103. Beyond the United Nations system, peacekeeping operations often must strengthen their reintegration efforts through ongoing contact with bilateral actors, and regional and non-governmental organizations. Only through such communication can a peacekeeping operation ensure that the many aspects of the international community's efforts converge and support the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

104. Again, the United Nations Operation in Mozambique offers an interesting model. There, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General was able to leverage international influence to advance certain political and social concerns that were crucial for the absorption of former combatants. This was achieved through close coordination of political and humanitarian activity by the Special Representative with the Supervision and Control Commission, a group of the Maputo representatives of donor countries. As a result of Member States' strong support of the efforts of the Special Representative, including the active role played by Italy, the United Nations was able to play a crucial role in advancing the peace process.

Enhanced institutional coordination

105. Beyond cooperation undertaken in the context of specific operations, the ability of United Nations peacekeeping operations to advance disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes could be strengthened by the long-term enhancement of coordination within the international community.

106. In recent years, the World Bank has become increasingly involved in providing technical and financial support to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. The expertise and resources of the international financial institutions can enable them to make a key contribution in this area; strengthened dialogue with the other elements of the United Nations system, including the Secretariat, can facilitate an integrated approach which simultaneously takes account of economic, social and political factors.

107. Further strengthening of relations with regional organizations is desirable. In addition to their role in disarmament and demobilization, as noted above, regional organizations can also contribute to rebuilding the social and political infrastructure that permits reintegration. Thus, in Kosovo, the United Nations has undertaken ground-breaking efforts with the European Union in regard to reconstruction and rehabilitation, and with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in institution-building. This experience, particularly because of its relatively clear reporting lines, may provide useful guidance for other joint efforts with regional organizations in the future.

108. In order to advance disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, today's peacekeepers often work closely with both local and international non-governmental organizations, which can bring capacity and resources to the field, and can heighten support for these efforts within donor countries. The United Nations offers excellent mechanisms for access to such organizations, many of which have established links with development, public information and disarmament elements within the system.

109. The ability of a peacekeeping operation to advance a reintegration process and to persuade local actors to abandon violence exists within the broader context of resources generally available within the conflict area. At a time of globalization, it may be unrealistic to shape a settlement around political actors alone in the hope that economic actors - especially commercial interests - will voluntarily sacrifice profits in order to support a tenuous peace agreement. In the past, private businesses have at times undermined a peace process by exploiting local divisions for material gain; for the future, it is desirable that the United Nations seek new ways to engage the business community as a partner and a catalyst for progress. Private businesses can support multi-ethnic employment, thereby fostering understanding and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities between communities. Through the creation of microcredit programmes, business may give impetus to the revival of an economy after a conflict. They may bring technology, capital, entrepreneurial skills and tax revenues that can lay the foundations for further progress.

110. By supporting the emergence of the rule of law and promoting relevant training, businesses can serve their own long-term interests, since they are helping to create an environment in which they can prosper. This is the premise underlying my call for a Global Compact with Business, which seeks to advocate appropriate corporate practices and policies, including in the areas of human rights, labour laws and the environment. Other elements in the United Nations system, including ILO and the United Nations Environment Programme, can assist in this effort.

111. The United Nations could seek ways to take a still more active role in developing codes of commercial conduct, promoting positive engagement, and where necessary, in exposing problems that exist. In view of the contribution that business may make to the reintegration process, and in view of the issues related to disarmament outlined above, the Security Council may wish to explore the creation of mechanisms through which it could enhance its capacity to enter into dialogue with business.

112. Furthermore, in view of the importance of bilateral efforts in fostering an economic environment that supports reintegration, donor States may wish to undertake a joint exploration of how they can strengthen their efforts in this regard. These could include development and trade policies that favour employment within countries emerging from conflict, for example, the reduction or elimination of tariffs against products of particular countries that are making a good-faith effort in this regard; they could also include incentives for businesses based in the donor country to invest in a post-conflict country, such as tax credits or partial subsidies of such activities. Elements of the United Nations system that could assist in such a review could include UNDP, the World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Trade Organization.

IV. ENSURING AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

113. This report is intended to outline some of the ways in which a peacekeeping operation may offer key support to a process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, together with some suggestions on how this might be further strengthened.

114. A consideration of past experience shows that a United Nations operation may bring key advantages of impartiality, legitimacy, security, political momentum and resources to a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; it also highlights the unique ability of a peacekeeping operation to coordinate simultaneous efforts in many different areas.

115. Beyond these inherent advantages, this review also suggests certain measures that favour the ability of a peacekeeping operation to advance disarmament, demobilization and reintegration:

(a) If a process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is to succeed, the basis for it should be provided for in a peace agreement, and the international community's advocacy may be essential in ensuring its inclusion;

(b) The disarmament process may require provision of expertise and resources to a peacekeeping operation that allow it to offer incentives to combatants (although this needs careful consideration); to undertake destruction of weapons; and to monitor and help control regional arms traffic. It may also be necessary for the international community to focus upon the economic dimension of arms flows;

(c) With regard to demobilization, a review of past peacekeeping experience also shows the importance of a strong political role and ample resources for peacekeeping operations, including, at times, a deterrent capacity. In addition, it has sometimes been useful to provide some funding within the assessed budget of a peacekeeping operation to allow this process to begin;

(d) A peacekeeping operation may make direct contributions to reintegration and may assist in fostering an appropriate political and socio-economic framework; however, further efforts are necessary to enhance the

United Nations access to the skills and resources required in this regard. The ability of peacekeeping operations to advance reintegration could also be strengthened through enhancement of institutional coordination within the international community.

116. By promoting the inclusion of child protection within peace agreements and by integrating it, where appropriate, into the staffing and mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations, the international community can favour response to the needs of children in the conflict area. However, it is essential, as noted above, that donors adopt a holistic and long-term view of the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers, which also embraces social healing and economic development. The measures outlined above, including the provision of separate encampment for children, speedy family reunification and long-term psychosocial assistance, have significant staffing and resource implications. Real progress will require sustained political, moral and financial support by both the Secretariat and Member States.

117. While the kind of engagement described above may make considerable conceptual and practical demands upon the international community, it is apparent that in many of today's conflicts the international community's strong support for a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is essential if it is to obtain real returns on its investment in peace. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind the principle of geographic consistency when considering the potential of peacekeeping operations to support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration - similar problems should receive comparable responses, regardless of where they occur.

118. As suggested above, the ultimate success of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process may require efforts long after the withdrawal of a multidisciplinary peacekeeping operation. The deployment of a follow-on mission may help support advances made and make further progress. This has at times consisted of a peacekeeping operation based around police. At other times, the Security Council has deployed political missions. Relevant skills for such missions may include expertise in legal issues, disarmament, human rights and issues related to child soldiers. As is true for peacekeeping operations, it remains crucial that such operations have a sufficiently broad mandate to make a difference, together with the resources and personnel to achieve that goal.

119. It must be remembered that the role of a peacekeeping operation in post-conflict disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is rooted in and feeds into a broader search for peace and development. The international community's key role in this process is to provide clear, consistent and determined support to an overall peace process and to offer long-term assistance with development. Only within this framework can the international community make a meaningful contribution to the success of a process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.